

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claim 2, AMEND claims 1 and 3-6, and ADD claims 7-9 in accordance with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A roller bearing assembly comprising:
at least one raceway member prepared from a steel plate; and
a plurality of rollers; and
~~wherein at least a raceway surface of said at least one raceway member is subjected to induction hardening and tempering~~
wherein the raceway member is an outer race having its opposite ends formed with annular collars,
a raceway surface of the outer race and an inner surface of one of the annular collars are subjected to induction hardening and tempering,
an inner surface of the other annular collar is left as a raw material so as to be formed by bending.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The roller bearing assembly as claimed in ~~Claim 2~~Claim 1, wherein the raceway surface of the outer race and the inner surface of the one annular collar have a hardness not lower than HV 653, and
~~an~~the inner surface of the other annular collar has a hardness not higher than HV 300.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~The roller bearing assembly as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the roller bearing assembly is a~~ A thrust roller bearing assembly comprising:
first and second axially opposed raceway members or only one of them; and
a plurality of rollers,
wherein at least the raceway surface of one of the first and second raceway members is

subjected to the induction hardening and tempering except for a portion crimped subsequent to the induction hardening and tempering.

5. (Currently Amended) The roller bearing assembly as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 1, wherein the raceway surface of the raceway member has an effective hardened layer depth in which the induction hardening is performed, said depth of the hardened layer being so chosen as to be smaller than the plate thickness of the raceway member.

6. (Currently Amended) The roller bearing assembly as claimed in ~~Claim~~claim 1, wherein the raceway member is prepared from the steel plate containing carbon in a quantity not lower than 0.4%.

7. (New) The thrust roller bearing assembly as claimed in claim 4, wherein the raceway surface of the outer race has a hardness not lower than HV 653, and
an inner surface of the crimped portion has a hardness not higher than HV 300.

8. (New) The thrust roller bearing assembly as claimed in claim 4, wherein the raceway surface of the raceway member has an effective hardened layer depth in which the induction hardening is performed, said depth of the hardened layer being smaller than the plate thickness of the raceway member.

9. (New) The thrust roller bearing assembly as claimed in claim 4, wherein the raceway member is prepared from the steel plate containing carbon in a quantity not lower than 0.4%.